

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Klutts Equipment

Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence

New product Makes Klutts An Industry Leader

Client Profile:

Klutts Equipment, located in Muskogee, Oklahoma, specializes in railroad equipment. Bill Klutts founded the company in 1987. It now employs about 25 people.

Situation:

Traditional methods of loading and unloading rail cars were complex and somewhat dangerous. It involved precariously raising a manned backhoe about 20 feet into the air. The process was slow and involved a lot of set-up time for individual cars. Like many industries, the railroad community often criticized the loading and unloading system. But tradition always won out as manufacturers were unwilling to risk business for new technology. Klutts Equipment President Bill Klutts knew the decades-old system was in need of updating. He saw an opportunity and called upon Win Adams, an applications engineer, and Brad Schell, a manufacturing extension agent, both with the Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence (The Alliance), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

The Alliance's Adams and Schell incorporated Klutts' vast experience in the railroad industry to develop prototype equipment. The new hydraulic machine is operated by remote control. It is self-loading and self-unloading. It adjusts itself to mount on cars of varying heights and widths. It allows the operator to control the unit safely from the ground. News of the new machine spread quickly and orders swamped Klutts. Schell helped map out a manufacturing plan and the equipment was pushed into production. Many large companies are rapidly transitioning to the new equipment, which is safer, faster and more cost effective.

Results:

- * Created 10 new jobs.
- * Produced \$750,000 in immediate new business.
- * Invested \$800,000 in capital.
- * Purchased new equipment that is making the industry safer.

Testimonial:

"With the help of the Alliance, we were able to change an industry that is not easily changed. We've made the industry safer, quicker and more cost-effective."

Bill Klutts, President